2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

the Gruda church was built three hundred and eighty years ago, soon after their arrival. This dates their settlement at the beginning of the sixteenth century—that is, after the Turks had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Djell and Berisha stocks are intermarriageable. About half the tribe was Catholic and half Moslem. It is now scattered and partly destroyed. The Powers awarded it to Montenegro in 1913 as a war

FIG. 1.—SKETCH MAP OF ALBANIAN TRIBES IN 1913

prize in spite of the prayers of the people. It was devastated and many refugees fled to Scutari. Again, after the Great War, it was badly handled by the incoming Serbs, who were active against Moslem and Catholic alike. They even tore the rings from the hands of a poor old lady whose only crime was that she was Catholic. I saw many hapless refugees in Scutari in 1921, but was powerless to help them. As in the days of the Turk, a new foe was forcing a shifting of the peoples.

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2. *Hoti.*—A tribe situated south of Gruda and extending to the lake of Scutari. It owned also large winter pastures on the plains by the Boyana, and, as do the other Maltsia e Madhe tribes, descended yearly with great flocks. But in 1913, when both Hoti and Gruda were given by the Powers to Montenegro, the frontier line deprived them of their winter pasture. The gentlemen sent to draw frontiers had their heads full only of "strategy," and would not see that they were condemning a people to die of hunger. Both Gruda and Hoti have been thus ruined.

When I knew the tribe it was all Catholic but three houses—those of the bairaktar, which became Moslem seven generations before, after winning great honour from the Turks in a fight against Dulcigno. Marash Hutzi, the hereditary surgeon of the tribe, a singularly charming and intelligent old man, told me that the ancestor of Hoti, Geg Laz, came from Bosnia, and arrived with all his family shortly after the building of the church of Gruda. On arriving they found people, "Anas," living on the land and settled among them. From these "Anas" twelve houses of Hoti trace descent, and are intermarriageable with the descendants of Geg Laz. From what part of Bosnia they came he could not tell. Geg was head of a large family group of herdsmen which trekked southward, doubtless to escape serfdom under a Moslem overlord. Geg Laz had three brothers: Piper Laz, Vaso Laz, and Krasni Laz. Piper and Vaso, as we shall see, were ancestors of the Piperi and Vasojevitch tribes, which became Montenegrin in the eighteenth century. Krasni was ancestor of the Moslem Albanian tribe Krasnichi. Thus of the four, two are now Serbophone and Orthodox; one Catholic and Albanophone, and the other Moslem and Albanophone.

Hoti, when I knew it, was the leader tribe of Maltsia e Madhe, and had earned this right by valour in war. Hoti's energy in 1878 thwarted the decree of the Berlin Congress and saved Tuzhi and the Plava-Gusinje districts from Montenegro. My poor old friend, Marash Hutzi, told how he, as a young man, had rushed round and summoned Hoti to the rescue, and put such a force on the frontier that Montenegro dared not risk occupying the districts.

Geg Laz had four sons, each of whom became head of a group ("vlaznii"). Marash gave his pedigree as in the table on the page opposite.

In few other lands in Europe can a man give the names of his forbears for three hundred years. Poor Marash, who was one of the best, died of pneumonia during the revolt of the tribes against Turkish rule in 1911. His house and all he owned was burnt. I met him in an exhausted state among the refugees. He smiled and pulled from his breast the two picture postcards I had sent him from London, the only things he had saved from the wreck. I helped him, and he begged

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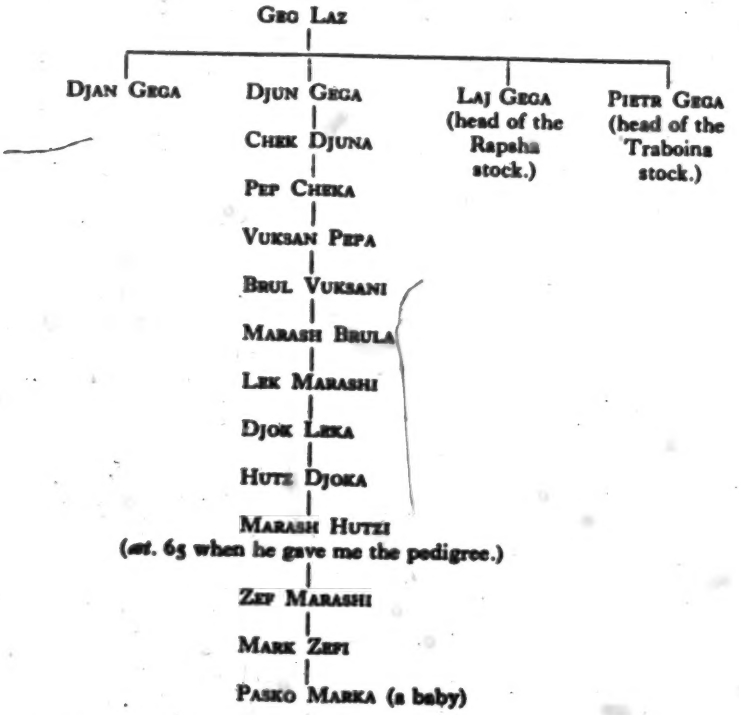
me not to give him more than his share. One of the Franciscans gave him shelter, for he was generally beloved, but he did not survive the winter. I mourned him at the time, but was later glad that he had died before his beloved tribe was handed to the enemy. The name "Hoti" is older than the arrival of Geg Laz. Jirecek, quoting the Venetian archives, states that the Hoti ("montanea Ottanorum") allied itself in 1474 with Ivan Tzrnojevitch and fought the Turks. The "Anas" must then have been numerous.



The tribe of Nikaj (see below) is also related to Hoti. Marash Hutzi said that Nikaj descends from a son of Krasnich. Baron Nopcsa learnt from another quarter that Nik was another brother of Geg Laz. That they are related is clear, for they are not intermarriageable.

Hoti usually marries the neighbour tribe Kastrati. As Kastrati mainly marries Hoti, after so many generations the two must be very closely related. But old Marash was extremely proud of the strict exogamy of the tribe. To marry "one's own blood" he looked on with unspeakable horror. I asked how many generations must pass before the descendants

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Mirdita. Since adopting Islam it has married into the two other Moslem tribes of the group, Matija and Dibra.

2. *Matija* is wholly Moslem. It had a very bad reputation when I was travelling in Albania, and was so much averse to foreigners that I did not visit it. It was about the only tribe that refused to accept blood-gelt and insisted on blood, and the more civilized tribes of Maltsia e Madhe used to say: "We are not so bad as Matija." It was notorious for constant cattle-stealing from the herds wintering on the plains and was said to consist of about twelve hundred houses. It has since come before the public, as its chief, Ahmed Zogu, with a large number of armed men at his back, aspired to rule Albania. He was expelled by the Albanians in 1924, but was returned forcibly to the country by the support of Belgrade, and it is said of other Powers, who saw in him a ready tool to assist their schemes. By first giving territory to the Serbs and then great concessions to Italy he has now put Albania into a difficulty, and she has become a bone of contention between Jugoslavia and Italy. In 1908, when all the tribes were eager for an independent Albania, no one could have foreseen its destinies would be thrown into the hands of the wildest and least educated of the tribes.

3. *Dibra*.—This tribe, too, I found unvisitable. It had as bad a reputation as Matija, but has suffered cruelly as a result of war, for the frontier has been drawn between the Dibrani and the town of Dibra, their market. This has caused great discontent both sides of the frontier, and some fighting. A frontier under no circumstances should cut a tribe land in half—if those who draw it wish to maintain peace.

Dibra and Matija formed part of the Principality of Skender Beg in the old days. Luria belonged to Dukagini.

4. *Arnji*.—A small independent tribe on the left bank of the river Mola. It is all Moslem and an offshoot of Berisha. I was the only foreigner who had passed through it for many years, and a long debate was held before I was admitted as guest. The women all wore Mirdite dress, and I was told the tribe married mainly Mirdite women.

PRIZREN GROUP

1. *Ljuma*.—When I knew it, this was a large and strong Moslem tribe. In 1912–13 it suffered very heavily. A Serb officer in my presence described how he and his battalion had bayoneted all the women and children in part of the tribe, because "women bear men," and laughed till he choked over his beer. The Serbs were "liberating the land from the Turkish yoke." On subsequent inquiry I learnt that some 1,400 persons had been massacred. Part of this tribe is now under Serb rule.

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district, too, is now part of Jugoslavia, and has suffered much at the hands of Serb and Montenegrin. The lands are being colonized by Serbs. Many Albanians have fled into Albania.

2. *Gusinje.*—This, in all probability, descends from some of the last of the Bosniaks who trekked south. Though largely Serbophone, the pre-war Gusinjans were so violently anti-Serb that when the Treaty of Berlin awarded them to Montenegro they resisted annexation so fiercely that the plan was dropped. Terrible vengeance was taken for this by the Montenegrins in 1913 and the Serbs in 1919. Men, women, and children were mercilessly slaughtered. Some thousands fled to Scutari for protection. A British force was there then. So greatly had these refugees suffered that they preferred to die of fever in the Scutari swamps to returning to Gusinje, where, as they said, the Serbs had thrown down food to attract a crowd of hungry children and had then thrown a bomb into the midst of them.

But the Powers permitted the Serbs to keep the district. The advent of the Serb has, in fact, reproduced the conditions of the Middle Ages, when the Turks advanced. I note the facts in order to enable an observer fifty or more years hence to learn how much of an original population is wiped out or absorbed by a conqueror.

3. *Plava.*—I did not visit, as it was opposed to admitting strangers. I was told by old Marash Hutzi, of Hoti, that part of Plava derived from Hoti, but that part was of very old stock called Pagani; but he did not know if Pagani were Moslems or Catholics. "Pagani," or "Paganezi," occurs as a proper name in some Durazzo and Ragusa documents of the thirteenth century. Possibly it was a usual term for "country people" among those of the coast and the towns who spoke a Latin dialect. The "Pagani" of Plava may be an "island" of an ancient population, e.g. Vlah.

To sum up briefly, the present tribes of Albania are in all probability mainly descended from the pre-Slav Balkan inhabitants. In the Serb Empire the herdsmen were recognized as Vlah and Albanian. A very large proportion of the Albanian mountains were, as we have seen, given along with their inhabitants to Serbian monasteries. Under Turkish rule the power of the monasteries naturally dwindled rapidly, and the Albanian serfs, more especially as they were largely, if not entirely, Catholic, would as rapidly break loose from servitude.

That the refugees who came into these mountains later were also of the herdsman class there is little reason to doubt. They came with their flocks, and are to this day strictly pastoral.

As we shall see in studying the Montenegrin tribes, the ultimate fate of these refugees has been largely influenced by whether they settled in land which was under the Orthodox Church, or whether

682 house to borrow sugar for the funeral feast—a request which was refused.
578 As I was the priest's guest, I could not attend the funeral; but it must have been interesting, for the murderer was one of the chief mourners—perhaps honestly so. My suggestion that he should be handed over
[692] to the Turkish authorities in Scutari for punishment was not received at all well by anyone; and it was pointed out to me that had it not
771 been the Will of God the man could not have died of only two bullets. Many men live with more in them. This curious case suggests that in earlier days the house lord may have had the power of life and death over his subjects.

MURDER OUTSIDE THE TRIBE

682 The tribe inflicts no punishment. The Turkish Government got its
628 fine if it could. Fines, in fact, being part of the Government's revenue, no effort was made to stop blood-taking by it.

The relatives of the murdered man take blood for him, of the family of the murderer if they can. An intertribal feud may become so intense that two whole tribes are "in blood." Peace can only be established by
[727] a Council of Elders of both tribes. When made, it was sometimes strengthened by marrying the daughter of one party to a man of the
[608] other. Or blood brotherhood may be sworn. The blood-gelt, fines, and the peace oath are as already described.

WOUNDING

683 A wound inflicted intentionally comes under the laws for blood. The house of the guilty man can be burnt and his goods can be seized (this in Dukagini), as in case of murder, if the elders examining the case think fit. He is liable to have his own blood taken by the injured man or his relatives. Blood of his son and brother may be taken (Dukagini).
[693] Con-jurors up to twenty-four may be called, but according to the nature of the injury a smaller number may suffice. The fine paid is in proportion to the wound, and is decided by the elders. The price to be paid for a death—a fatal wound—is taken as standard, and the wound reckoned as one-half, quarter, tenth, etc., of a death price. It is, in fact, payment for the amount of blood lost.

In the case of a wound given accidentally, the house is not burnt, but the wound must be paid for. A man I knew, playing with a rifle, accidentally shot a woman through the foot and, unfortunately, made her lame for life. He had to pay fifteen napoleons to her husband (for damaging his property), and had to undertake to pay a further fifteen should the woman die at any future time as a result of lameness.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EG1 Albania EG1

POSTSCRIPT

Then the Young Turk movement rose. Albanians seized upon it, precipitated the revolution at Uskub in Kossova, and were the deciding factor in terrifying the Sultan and winning the Constitution which promised to respect the languages and laws of subject peoples in Turkey. When these promises were broken, when Montenegro and Serbia invaded Albania, the chiefs raised the flag of Scanderbeg and wrote their own Constitution of Lushnija. The Six Powers, in an effort to maintain the Balkan equilibrium, gave Albania a German king. As soon as the Powers were engaged in the Great War, Albania drove him out. During the war she impartially fought both sides whenever they invaded Albanian territory. When the war ended, when Jugo-Slavia replaced Austria as Italy's rival on the Adriatic, and England and France quarreled, Albania played a shrewd game at Versailles and Geneva and became officially an independent republic.

Still blockaded after ten years of war and blockade, still fighting invaders in the Mati and the Dibra, she became an independent republic. Her people, from Hoti and Gruda to Corfu, from the Merdite to the Adriatic, were refugees. Her flocks had been killed, her villages burned, her orchards hacked down, her irrigation systems destroyed. She had a provisional government, hardly strong enough to hold itself together. She could not have a permanent government until her boundaries were fixed by the League of Nations.

POSTSCRIPT

She had great natural wealth and no debts, 175
but she had no currency of her own, no banks, 727
no credit system. She had hides, wool, and olive oil to export, but all her frontiers were closed by enemies. She had minerals, forests, water power, oil, harbors, but no machines of any kind, no trained men, no commercial organization. She had the strongest men, the bravest fighters, the most indomitable national spirit in Europe, but few of her people could read or write. Certainly more than half the population was ill from malnutrition and malaria, and she had probably the highest infantile mortality rate in Europe.

This was the new Albania which must somehow maintain itself. And if the curtain of silence behind which this Balkan drama is played were a stone wall shutting out her neighbors, the situation would not be so difficult. But Italy—promised southern Albania by the secret Treaty of London in 1915 which induced her to join the Allies against Germany, and cheated of her payment—has authority from the League of Nations to occupy Albania again if the Albanians fail to maintain a stable government. Serbia is still intriguing to push farther south and west the boundary lines not yet entirely fixed by the League of Nations.

There were other difficulties. Because the 175
Toshks are the Albanians who can read and 727
write, the weak provisional government was 578
Toshk. Around the fires in their mountain houses, the Ghegs were saying that only cow-

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

POSTSCRIPT

ardly Toshks would allow free Albania to bow to a League of Nations—a League of the very Powers who were her enemies. The Ghegs, they said, were no such shameful trucklers. And every fire had its refugee guests who had fled from burning villages, leaving terror and death behind them. These refugees cried to their brother Ghegs for vengeance. Did the Ghegs call themselves men and Albanians? they demanded. "Our teeth in the throats of the Serbs!" the Ghegs replied.

Meanwhile in Tirana the Toshks were talking softly of patience, and of more patience, of waiting month after month for a commission and yet another commission from the League of Nations. The Toshks—with that threat of Italian invasion over them—were demanding peace, peace at any cost. Albania must wait for the League of Nations to fix the boundaries, must acquiesce in any boundaries fixed, must be quiet, must wait.

While they waited, the people starved. Prices in Albania are higher than in the United States —higher in dollars. The homespun garments have worn out; there is nothing to replace them. Fields have been devastated, and no men left alive to till them. Flocks have disappeared, horses and mules are gone. And as the boundaries have been fixed, mile by mile upon a map, Dibra and Mati have lost their market cities, Dukaghini and Merdite have lost their grazing lands, the tribes of Hoti and Gruda and Castrati have been cut in two. Still, the Albanian gov-

POSTSCRIPT

ernment spoke of peace, demanded peace, and—determined to have peace—set about disarming the Ghegs in the very face of their enemies.

This was the Albania into whose capital I blithely rode, in the rattling little Ford, on that spring night of 1922. I pass over all the minor political disputes, the ambitions of selfish men, the mistakes of foolish ones, the bitter rivalry between Elbassan, to the south, Scutari, to the north, and Tirana, in the center, for the honor and profit of being Albania's capital. Tirana was, tentatively, the capital; made so because it was everywhere conceded to be the least progressive, the most hopelessly Mohammedan, the most dangerously un-Albanian city in the country. The government had made Tirana the capital for the same reason that the teacher puts the worst boy of the class in the front seat. But this was no solace to Scutari or Elbassan.

Tirana, the white, low town, drowsed in the sun; water rippled in the gutters of the winding, walled streets; donkeys laden with cedar boughs, the brooms of Tirana, carefully picked their footing on the uneven cobbles; women with gayly painted cradles on their backs trudged behind the donkeys. Men in rags of their homespun white garments and Scanderbeg jackets and colored sashes sat all day on the low walls around the mosques. The fez makers, amid their piles of raw wool and mixing bowls and heating irons, were talking politics, and so were the men in the street of the coppersmiths, which is musical from

*[In spring 1922 [301] -- Analyst]

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among ourselves. There we took stock of what we had learned, and sought to impose a definite pattern on the many projects we had so often revolved on the march, or discussed around the hearth at night. Our[1] first aim from the beginning had been to raise the Ghegs against the Germans, both with the laudable object of killing our enemies wherever and whenever possible, and, above all, so as to disrupt their overland communications: the main road from Tirana to Scutari and its lateral links with Macedonia — the roads from Tirana to Dibra and from Scutari to Kukes and Prizren. These roads were important targets; for the German troops in Albania depended upon them for their communications with the Reich, and they also afforded the second of the two lines of retreat open to the enemy's garrisons in Greece.

The thinkers who inspire, and the historians who record, the course of revolutions tend naturally to dwell on those ideological issues which lend them their distinctive character. In the making, however, they more often appear to the revolutionary, as wars do to the strategist, in terms of power and technique. The first object, therefore, of our reconnaissances had been to discover what was the distribution of power in North Albania.

The strongest force in the land was still the German army, but the roots of its strength were abroad, and our journeys had shown us that its influence was on the wane. Among the Ghegs power lay in the armed might and resources of the tribes, and, to a much smaller extent, in the wealth of the merchants and the landowners of the plain. The strength of the tribes was sapped by their disunity and was never canalised into any higher unit of organisation than the tribe itself. Nevertheless, geographical barriers tended to separate the tribes into distinct regional groups; and, within one or more such groups, they were sometimes brought together by a man pre-eminent among them by his personal ability, family tradition, or wealth. Such a leader enjoyed influence rather than authority; for his following was never more than a loose, voluntary, and shifting confederacy of tribes and parts of tribes, intolerant of any form of discipline. These confederacies were none the less the

[1] [British underground liaison officers -- Analyst]

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*669 after some of the stiffest fighting in the whole rising; Muharrem Bairaktar occupied Kukes, while Fikri Dine seized Dibra. The hold of the Italians was reduced to the ports of Valona and Durazzo, and the cities of Scutari and Tirana. There the Italian garrisons remained in control; but already their commanders were negotiating with members of the British Military Missions, and it seemed for a moment as if Albania might pass altogether out of the enemy's power. The Germans, however, were as quick to react in the Balkans as in Italy itself. A parachute division was flown to Tirana, and quickly dispersed the guerillas hanging on the fringes of the city. The Germans then marched against Abas Kupi, took Kruya by storm after a three-day battle, and threw the Agha and his men back into Mati. Another division was rushed into South Albania from Macedonia and methodically drove the Partisans out of the towns and back into the mountains. Within a fortnight the insurgents were everywhere on the defensive.

• 727 The Germans, however, were faced[1] with an acute shortage of manpower; and their High Command decided that no more than two and a half divisions could be spared for the pacification and garrisoning of Albania. They therefore deployed these forces so as to defend the coast from invasion across the Adriatic and to guard the principal towns and the roads on which they would depend for the maintenance of their communications. The rest of the country they determined to neutralise by policy rather than force. As a first step they arranged the release of most of the Albanian leaders whom the Italians had imprisoned for political reasons, and announced their intention of withdrawing from Albania as soon as the war was ended. They then encouraged the Albanians to reconstitute their state and persuaded Mehdi Frasheri, Lef Nosi, and Pater Anton Arapi to form a Council of Regency.

These three were men of honourable repute, representative of the chief religious communities and generally respected as elder statesmen who had played their part in the creation of an independent Albania a generation before. Under their aegis there was presently formed a government whose members were

[1] [Following Italian capitulation in mid-1943--Analyst]

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for the most part untainted by collaboration with the Italians. On taking office they at once proclaimed Albania's neutrality in the World War, citing the example of Egypt as a precedent for the presence of belligerent forces on the soil of a neutral Power. They next repealed the Fascist constitution, allowed some measure of freedom of the Press and of association, and announced a general amnesty for all who had taken up arms against the Italians. This regime compared favourably with that of the Italians; and, since it was now clear that Albania would remain in the Axis zone, at least until the end of the winter, all but the boldest spirits took advantage of the amnesty. The new government, however, lacked the arms or the money to enforce its authority over the country; and the Germans wisely declined to make good the deficiency; for they already feared that the Albanians might one day turn against them. The writ of Tirana might run in the towns and the coastal plain where German troops were stationed; but the rest of Albania relapsed into its traditional state of anarchy; and in each district power was abandoned to the rival chiefs and guerilla leaders. Such a situation, accompanied as it was by continued supplies of comparatively cheap food from the Kossovo, was not displeasing to the Albanians; and German policy, seconded by the approach of winter, was presently rewarded by a general relaxation of the political tension and a decline in the activities of the guerillas.

Now, when Enver Hoja saw that the Germans did not intend to impose their rule beyond the towns and the main network of communications, he determined henceforward to devote the greater part of the energies of the L.N.C. to the liquidation of their political rivals. He accordingly refused to ratify the Mukai agreement and, in October 1943, issued a directive to all Partisan units to attack and destroy the forces of the Balli Kombetar wherever they might find them, even if it should mean suspending operations against the Germans. Civil war broke out; the superior discipline and equipment of the Partisans prevailed; and in a few weeks the Ballist forces were driven back into those areas where the presence of German troops prevented the further prosecution of the struggle. In

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*669 the territories which they had thus brought under their control, the Partisans rewarded their supporters, punished their enemies, and laid down the rudiments of a Communist administration which soon began to organise the civilian population in support of the revolution. Meanwhile the Ballist leaders began, first surreptitiously and then more openly, to visit their friends in the Tirana Government and to seek their help to defend Albania
● [727] from Communism. The Germans were quick to seize this opportunity of diverting Albanian energies into internecine channels; they forgot the Ballist raids on their convoys; and accordingly made sufficient arms available through the Tirana Government to re-equip the Ballist bands and send them back into the mountains as counter-guerillas. The civil war in Southern Albania was thus indefinitely prolonged, to the exhaustion of the Albanians and the repose of the German army.

*669 665 By driving the Ballists into the arms of the Tirana Government, and so of the Germans, Enver Hoja succeeded in branding them as "collaborationists". At the same time, this deliberate political manœuvre revealed his social revolutionary intentions and alarmed Abas Kupi and the chief men among the Ghegs. Abas Kupi indeed had been the architect of the policy of alliance with the Balli Kombetar and, at Mukai, had entered into formal obligations towards them on behalf of the L.N.C. He therefore regarded Enver Hoja's change of front as a personal betrayal and came increasingly to suspect that his Communist colleagues meant to attack him, just as they had attacked the Ballists, unless he submitted to full Communist control. Accordingly, when his entreaties and rebukes had alike failed to persuade Enver Hoja to abandon the civil war, he determined to separate himself from a movement whose leaders he could not trust and already feared. He therefore set about consolidating his faction in Mati, Kruya, and Tirana, and took soundings among the leading Albanians who were known to favour a restoration of the monarchy. Then, in December 1943, at a congress held in the village of Herri in the mountains north of Tirana, he proclaimed the formation of the Zogist movement. True to his ideas of a United Front, he at once

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between us was insensibly eased by the prospect of a further exchange of views.

It was already dark when we made an end of our discussions, but Abas Kupi none the less decided that we should move that same evening to another village. I thought at first that this was a precaution against surprise attacks but, on enquiry, was told the simpler truth: in the two days that we had been there the bodyguard had devoured such food as the village could spare and no more could be obtained for the evening meal without straining the loyalty of the inhabitants. Hunger indeed was the sternest taskmaster of the guerillas, and the struggle to find food kept them continually on the move. We set out, therefore, into the night and, after an hour's march, came to a village where I was lodged with Abas Kupi and his staff in a large, two-storied house.

A blizzard sprang up in the night and we woke to find the face of the mountains whitened with snow. I was impatient to join Maclean and discuss my impressions with him, but the fury of the elements kept us indoors all day. By next morning, however, the gale had dropped; I therefore took leave of Abas Kupi and, crossing the range, rode back into the camp at dusk.

6

TWELVE days had passed since we had landed in Albania[1] and we had by now reorganised the network of British Missions and assured our own mobility and communications with Headquarters. Our next task was to complete a reconnaissance of the situation which confronted us. According to our information there were some twenty-five thousand German troops in Albania, belonging, most of them, to the XXI Mountain Corps. The Corps Headquarters were in Tirana, and controlled the 297th Infantry Division, deployed in Central and Southern Albania, and the 181st Mountain Division, based on Scutari.[1] There were besides some units in the South belonging to the

[1] The 181st Mountain Division was also responsible for internal security in Southern Montenegro.

[1] [i.e. on the night of 18th April, 1944.—Analyst]

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[727] XXII Mountain Corps, whose Headquarters were at Yannina. The Kossovo was independently garrisoned, mainly by the German-officered Albanian division, S.S. Skanderbeg. The *669 Partisans, who now formed the chief Albanian resistance movement, were reported to have nearly fifteen thousand men under arms. Except, however, for insignificant groups these were all among the Tosks, south of the river Shkumbi. The Ballist forces were also concentrated in the South and about Tirana, but were now reduced to little more than five thousand men. We were thus tolerably informed of the numbers and circumstances of our German enemies and Partisan allies, but knew almost nothing of the military potentialities of the Zogist movement in particular, or of the Ghegs in general. Maclean and I therefore set out on 3rd May to join Abas Kupi and study conditions in Mati and Kruya for ourselves. Meanwhile Smiley and Hare remained at base to reconnoitre the precise dispositions of the Germans and to take soundings of opinion in Tirana.

[342] Abas Kupi and his staff had assembled in the fortress home of Tsen Lezi,[1] set in a cleft in the mountains high above the Mati valley. We joined him there about nightfall and found [352] the Zogist leaders seated round the hearth at the end of a long and narrow hall, lit only by the flames of the fire. The skins of sheep and goats were spread out on the floor as carpets, and the walls and rude crossbeams which supported the roof were black and shiny with soot. So must have been the keep of Dunsinane. Tsen Lezi, the master of the house, was wild and woolly like an aged bear, and grunted as he ambled out to greet us. His eyes were small and bright; his bushy moustache sprouted in all directions; and his clothes were brown and furry, homespun from the shearings of his sheep. 596 He ruled sternly over his family, or clan, for there were more than sixty of them living in the house, and directed every detail of dynastic policy: what land or livestock should be bought or sold, which of the children should be sent to school, what marriages should be made, what blood feuds prosecuted

[1] A Mati chieftain, not to be confused with the Dibran leader, Tsen Elezi.

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All of these men had taken part that autumn in the rising against the Italians, and many had seen their homes burnt and their livestock slaughtered in the accompanying reprisals. They had fought, however, with spirit, for they had been exasperated by Italian rule, and had believed that the hour of liberation, and of looting, was at hand. Now the situation was very different : they bore little hatred against the Germans ; for the German yoke sat upon them lightly, and, in their remote regions, months might pass without their even seeing a German soldier. They knew indeed that an Allied victory was certain but, although they meant to play their part in the final destruction of the enemy, they had a wholesome respect for his ruthless ways. Only six months before they had risen in premature revolt ; the price had been heavy ; and they intended to make doubly sure of the fruits of victory before they again exposed their families and property to the risk of reprisals.

They received us with every mark of friendship and respect, but we saw that they would not easily be moved to fight. The fear of reprisals had become an obsession with them ; and, when we urged them to take the field, they only pointed to the ruins of Burrel and to the gutted houses which in almost every village recalled the passage of an Italian army. Burrel was the capital of Mati, built by King Zog as the model provincial city of Albania. It had once numbered some ten thousand inhabitants and had boasted solid public buildings, schools, a hospital, and modern houses such as had never been seen in these backward regions. In the rising of 1943 the clansmen of Mati had rushed the town and captured it, driving the Italian garrison back into their fortified barracks. The Italian command in Tirana had despatched reinforcements to the relief of the garrison ; but Abas Kupi had lain in wait for them on the Qafa Stamm pass and for three days had disputed their crossing of the Skanderbeg range. Meanwhile the men of Mati had looted Burrel and decimated its defenders. In the end the Italians had reoccupied the city, and had set fire in revenge to every building in it. Nothing now remained but the gutted shell of its buildings, altogether deserted, with

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the grass growing up between the paving-stones — a silent reminder to the people of the valley of the price of revolt.

We spent two days with the *Beys* of Mati; and the results of their discussions with us and with Abas Kupi were embodied in a formal resolution. The chiefs reaffirmed their loyalty to the Zogist movement, and proclaimed a general *besa*, or truce of blood feuds to last until the end of the war. They declared that they would resist any attempts by the Partisans to enter their territories, but rejected an invitation from the Central Government to send forces to join in a drive against them. They offered to provide our Mission with guards, guides, hospitality, and information, and appointed Abas Kupi to negotiate with us on their behalf. Finally, they agreed in principle to fight against the Germans, but left it to the Agha to settle with us the exact terms on which they should take the field.

These decisions were the best that we could hope for at this stage, and we therefore took leave of the assembled *Beys*, after warning them in appropriate speeches of the dangers of continued neutrality. We now marched north-west towards Burrel and were received at dusk into the ruined house of one of Abas Kupi's bodyguards. In the night, soon after we had retired, we were woken by the sound of a car. We jumped up hurriedly, and, pulling on our boots, sprang to arms outside, fearing a surprise attack. Our visitor, however, proved to be an Albanian officer, a spy of Abas Kupi's, who had come out to give us information of recent changes in German troop dispositions. He brought besides grave political news which was confirmed next morning in a message from Smiley. The Partisans had held a congress at Permeti, where resolutions had been passed calling for the formation of an L.N.C. provisional government, and demanding that Abas Kupi be declared an Enemy of the People. The clouds of civil war were already gathering in the South.

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We had descended into the Mati valley from the Ziber mountains and for two days had followed the left bank of the river,

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Map to illustrate the situation in Northern Albania, and the activities of the Maclean Mission, April–November 1944

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accordingly, and, trusting to their consent, pressed on at once with our plans for revolt. Merret was sent with Sergeants Jones and Jenkins to establish a rear base in the mountains of Matsukull, north of the river Mati, where supplies might be received in greater safety than at our camp on Mount Bastar. Meanwhile, with Abas Kupi's approval, we despatched messengers to the leading Gheg chiefs, inviting them to meet us on the 4th of July in the Plain of Lura.

The details of our agreement were kept a strict secret, but the news that we had agreed was soon widely known; and morale rose among the Zogists. The mountains, however, are a great whispering gallery; and it was not long before an account of our discussions was in Enver Hoja's hands.

4

THE Germans, meanwhile, had launched a political offensive which required our immediate attention. The "collaborationist" Prime Minister, Rejeb Bey Mitrovitsa, had been forced to resign on the suspicion that his failure to proceed actively against the Partisans had not been altogether involuntary. Since then Dr. Neubacher, the German Minister of State in the Balkans, had arrived by 'plane from Belgrade and had approached a number of Albanian political leaders, including some of known pro-Allied sympathies. To these he had represented that, whatever their sympathies in the war, it was now their duty as patriots to form a coalition government to stem the advance of the Communists. He had promised subsidies and military supplies, and had hinted darkly that he had good reason to believe that the British would no longer view such action with disfavour.

We saw at once that the formation of an anti-Communist front under German aegis must confuse the public mind and seriously prejudice our plans for a revolt of the Ghegs. A week would pass before our Headquarters could approve the terms of our agreement with Abas Kupi, or send the first consignment of supplies; and we therefore decided to go down

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petty humiliation which he could devise. The young man's life in the regiment had been made unendurable, until one evening in the mess he had lost his temper and slapped the new Captain's face. He had been placed under open arrest for striking a superior officer, and had been warned by a friend that reduction to the ranks would be his punishment. He had therefore deserted and found employment in Jemal Herri's bodyguard as a machine-gun instructor. He came to us now, haggard and almost toothless, though still only twenty years old; a desperate fellow with his hand against every man's. He made no pretence of hating the Nazi regime but told us frankly that he only sought to work for us because he had cut himself off from his own kind.

In such men professional pride sometimes supplies the place of honour, so that they make good agents. We decided, therefore, to put him to the test, and sent him to Tirana to spy on his compatriots. We never heard what happened to him there; but some days later he arrived at the headquarters of a Partisan unit and asked to be sent to the nearest British liaison officer. He claimed to bring important information, but the Partisans were taking no chances and cut his throat.

10

We still remained without instructions; but the march of events did not wait on the deliberations of our staff officers and diplomats. The days of German rule in the Balkans were numbered. The Red army was advancing into Roumania; Bucharest lay in the grip of a political crisis; and the leaders of Bulgaria prepared to abandon a lost cause. The Germans had already begun to withdraw their troops from Greece and no longer made any secret that they would soon be leaving Albania. The prospect of their withdrawal conjured up the spectre of a Communist victory; and the Nationalist leaders in Tirana were made desperate by their fears for the future. The bankruptcy of the policy of "collaboration" was plain to all; and we judged that, in their terror of Communism, the Nation-

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alists would resort to any course of action which offered even the hope of British support.

We therefore decided that the time was ripe for a last attempt to raise a Nationalist revolt against the Germans. Abas Kupi seemed to be the natural leader for such a revolt, by virtue of his military power, his personal prestige, and his long connection with the British. The civil war, however, had made great inroads on his strength; and we knew that he could not fight alone. At the same time we surmised that the Ballist leaders, the Captain of Mirdita, and even the members of the Government might now be persuaded to seek their safety and the forgiveness of the Allies by rallying to the Agha's cause.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of 16th August, Maclean and I set out from Mukai and met Abas Kupi in the foothills of the range above the plain of Kruya. We sat with him for two hours, urging that the Germans were weak and that, if he attacked them now, he might still influence our Headquarters to decide their policy in his favour. We reminded him too that, though we could make no promise of political support, we were always ready to supply him with arms as soon as he should take the field. Our arguments were strengthened by his own despair, and, if he heard us without enthusiasm, it was also without objection.

We left him at sunset and pushed on across the plain to Ihsan Toptani's farm. There we had planned a meeting with Nureddin Vlora, through whose intermediary we hoped to convey our views to the leaders of the Government and of the Balli Kombetar. Nureddin was well qualified for such a task by his known pro-British sympathies, and his personal and political influence might make him a powerful advocate of our thesis. Ihsan told us, however, that the Germans had begun a reign of terror in the capital and had arrested a number of Albanians on the mere suspicion of favouring the Allies. At such a moment Nureddin did not wish to attract attention by leaving Tirana, and had therefore suggested that we postpone our meeting until the present "terror" had subsided. Such prudence was certainly justifiable, but it seemed to us that the German policy of repression must excite the indignation of the

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half an hour, and then towards midday Ihsan summoned the carriage to take us to our meeting with Nureddin Vlora. We drove out past the ultra-modern Hôtel Daiti, the centre of "collaborationist" intrigue, and beyond King Zog's palace, a tall, yellow building set in an overgrown park, entered the smart, residential quarter of the town. For some minutes our coachman followed a broad, shady avenue and then, turning into a side road, pulled up outside a modern villa built in a small garden. I got down from the carriage and saw two German soldiers standing on the other side of the road. For a fraction of a second I feared that we had been betrayed, but Ihsan quickly explained that they were only guarding the German Minister's residence. We were to lunch in the villa opposite.

This villa belonged to a friend of Nureddin and might well have been in Paris from the taste and style of its decoration. Our charming, French-speaking hostess let us in herself, and I stayed talking with her while Ihsan and her husband went to fetch Nureddin. Suddenly there was a knock at the door, and I was dismissed to the dining-room while she went out to answer it. She was back in a few moments and told me with a smile that the visitor had been a young attaché from the German Legation opposite, who had come to ask permission to retrieve his dog from the garden. Our host and Ihsan presently returned with Nureddin; and we sat down to an excellent lunch with delicious Turkish dishes, good Italian wine, and genuine Benedictine. Our hostess served us herself, having given her maid the day off for greater safety.

727 Nureddin was resplendent in white ducks and a white silk bush-shirt, and seemed as fit and debonair as at our first meeting. He began by discussing the demoralisation of the Germans and the reign of terror which they had recently inaugurated. Their strength was ebbing away, their friends were already deserting, and in the rising tide of revolt they sought to preserve their authority by making themselves feared. Their first important victim had been the Ballist leader, Skender Mucho. They had shot him two days before without trial, but on the suspicion—so the *Gestapo* headquarters had

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let it be known — that he had been in touch with the British. Since then they had arrested some forty prominent Ballists believed to entertain pro-Allied sympathies, and had deported them to the notorious concentration camp at Zemun, in Yugoslavia. Nor were their relations with the Albanian Government of a more cordial nature: they had altogether lost confidence in Fikri Dine, and dared not supply him with the arms and funds which they had promised, lest he should turn against them. They knew themselves defeated; they were haunted by the fear of revolt, and started even at their own shadows. Bitter intrigues flourished among them; and the S.S. General Fistun, who had assumed supreme command in Albania after the attempt on Hitler's life, had arrested a number of his own officers on grounds of political unreliability.

Nureddin had described the despair of the Germans with satisfaction: he now discussed the prospects of the Albanians with dismay. The Partisans already hung on the fringes of Tirana, and there was scarcely a night when they did not raid into its suburbs. Unless preventive measures were taken they would break into the city when the Germans left, and, as he delicately put it:

"I dread to think what may happen, for life in the mountains has made some of these boys rather rough."

He went on to speak of his fears of violent revolution and of the destruction of the "cultured classes". The situation was desperate, and, unless the British were prepared to restrain the Partisans, the Albanian Nationalists were politically and personally doomed. He paused a moment and added:

"If there is anything we can still do to gain your help, tell me; and you may be sure that I will do everything in my power to see that the Nationalist leaders follow your advice."

I had been waiting for such an opening, and answered:

"It is already the eleventh hour and I can promise nothing. But if all of you will now turn on the Germans and attack them with all your forces, perhaps something can still be saved."

The news from Roumania and Bulgaria illustrated my argument and Nureddin only asked:

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000 "To whom should we rally?"

"You will find us with Abas Kupi," I answered, and he signified that he had understood.

We were still talking when a middle-aged man of heavy build with close-cropped grey hair and vinous countenance came into the room. He greeted me in fluent, rather clipped English; and indeed, but for the suspicion of a foreign accent, he might well have been a retired colonel from a British cavalry regiment. This was Nureddin's brother, Jemaleddin Vlora Pasha, the last Albanian to bear the title. Jemaleddin had been a dignitary at the court of Sultan Reshad and had married a daughter of the Khedive of Egypt. After the downfall of the Ottoman Empire he had lived for some years in Cairo, where he had known Lord Lloyd and other leading Englishmen connected with the Middle East. Unlike his brother, he played little part in politics, but he remembered the strong anti-Communist prejudices of his English friends and simply could not believe that we would ever abandon his country to the Partisans. Revolution was spreading over the Balkans like an irresistible flood; kings, statesmen, and generals were engulfed in a common ruin; and, while the Partisans hammered at the gates of Tirana, the last Pasha of Albania turned to me and said:

"You really must do something, my dear fellow, or we shall have a lot of trouble with these rotters up in the mountains."

"Whom the Gods would destroy . . ."

727 From these conversations we walked back through Tirana towards Ihsan's flat. The sun shone, and the crowd in the streets reproduced all the contrasts of Albanian life. Ragged peasants in white caps and baggy breeches rubbed shoulders with smart, Italianised young officials. There were old-fashioned Balkan merchants, some still wearing the red fez of Turkish times; down-at-heel soldiers of the regular army; and Ballist irregulars, armed to the teeth and swathed in bandoliers. Every now and then we also passed small groups of German officers and soldiers, hurrying to their offices with

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bulging brief-cases, or strolling towards the shops and cafés. Boyish in their tropical kit, pestered by pedlars and jostled by the oriental throng, they reminded me irresistibly of British troops in the Middle East. I had served myself in Cairo and Jerusalem; and it was a new experience, and perhaps not uninstructive, to see an army of occupation from the point of view of the native.

Ihsan had arranged for me to meet two other political leaders and I spent the next hour or so in his house, answering their questions and urging them to take up arms against the Germans. Having thus diff sed my arguments into the political world of Tirana, I went out again to reconnoitre the *Wehrmacht*, *Luftwaffe*, and *Gestapo* headquarters. My purpose was to check up on rumours that the Germans had begun to evacuate them, and also to find out how they were defended in case we should ever have a chance to attempt an insurrection. We were thus engaged when suddenly an open carriage pulled up beside us, and one of Abas Kupi's officers jumped out and shook me warmly by the hand. His mission seemed analagous to my own, and I trusted his discretion as well as his goodwill. It was the second time, however, that I had been recognised that day, and we were thus ominously reminded how small was the Albanian capital.

The day's work was done, and there was nothing to be gained by further delay. We stopped to buy a filigree cigarette case as a souvenir of my visit, and then returned to Ihsan's house to pick up the carriage. We drove back along the same dirty streets by which we had entered the city and reached the "check-post" about half an hour before sunset. A convoy of some thirty trucks was waiting for the night to leave for Scutari; and a company or so of German soldiers sat smoking by the roadside. The gendarmes were checking the papers of two young Albanians driving a small car; and it seemed for a moment that they would ask for ours. One of them, however, recognised Ihsan's coachman and waved us on with a friendly smile.

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which presently amounted to some eight hundred men.

In Tirana the Germans sought desperately for friends among the Albanians; at last, on 6th September, they succeeded in forming the shadow of a government under the presidency of Ibrahim Bey Bichaku. The new administration, however, could not rely on a hundred men; and Ibrahim was recommended for office solely by the affection of the German Minister, with whom he played ping-pong every day. As if to mock the impotence of this government Mustafa Kruya, the "arch-collaborationist", now left for Vienna, never to return. Only Jon Marko Joni still hesitated, but he too abandoned the capital and retired to Scutari to watch the fortunes of the Zogists. The days of "collaboration" were over, and Tirana was become nothing but a German redoubt.

Meanwhile the Moslem North was up in arms. The Partisans had overrun Dibra; and the Dibran chiefs, many of them former "collaborationists", had been won over to the L.N.C. by their own incomparable opportunism and the wise diplomacy of Mustafa Jinishi. Tsen Elezi and Dan Kalloshi abandoned the Double Eagle for the Red Star; and, under Partisan direction, their forces were variously engaged in the civil war or the war of liberation. Further north in Liuma Muharrem Bairaktar had already taken the field in the last days of August. He had prepared his attack for some weeks and was finally stung to action by an ultimatum from the German commander in Kukes, who demanded the surrender of two Austrian officers who had deserted from their regiment and had sought his protection. The Partisans had not yet entered Liuma, but Muharrem had already conferred with Mustafa Jinishi, and, though he declined to join the L.N.C., he had agreed to full military co-operation with their forces.

But the fiercest struggle against the Germans in all Albania was led by Gani Kryeziu and his brother, Hassan, with the help of Simcox and his Mission. Since the end of July Gani had been receiving arms from our Headquarters; and the communiqués of his operations were broadcast in the Albanian transmissions of Radio Bari. His influence grew with his successes and the knowledge that he enjoyed British support;

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• 727 In the panic frenzy of defeat the Germans lashed out in all directions, arresting harmless townsmen on the mere suspicion of being Partisans, Zogists, or Ballists. They were too demoralised, however, to hunt the guerillas any longer, and we could now move freely in the plain, except along the coast or in the towns. The defection of the " collaborationists " was followed by that of the Albanians in German employment, and we were visited one night by a young man of good family who was the chief interpreter to the *Gestapo*. A tall, dark fellow, with his uniform cap set at a rakish angle, his jack-boots highly polished and a cigarette hanging from his lips, he might have been the villain in a melodrama. He spoke English, indeed, with a peculiarly *villainous* accent, but drew for us a vivid picture of the confusion in Tirana, concealing his own fears behind a mask of irony. Now, when they most needed unity, the German commanders were torn by intrigues and recriminations. Their despair, moreover, had induced in them a mood of romanticism, and they vied with one another to win personal popularity by distributing autographed telescopes and pistols to their Albanian friends. The Albanian gendarmes and officials had disappeared, and the only remaining evidence of political activity was the German Minister's daily game of ping-pong with Ibrahim Bichaku. Meanwhile the *Luftwaffe* headquarters were besieged with staff officers demanding passages to Germany.

Yet, despite this apparent confusion, the Germans pressed on with their preparations for retreat; and Merret, who was watching the Tirana–Scutari road, reported as many as two hundred trucks moving northwards in a single night. The general withdrawal had not yet been ordered, but officers and men knew that it was at hand and looked anxiously over their shoulders. And well they might, for the way home lay through Montenegro and Bosnia, and many feared that they might only escape from Albania to be done to death by Tito's Partisans. Guessing their mood, we judged that the time had come to carry the work of subversion into the ranks of the German army itself, and, through a hundred different channels, we now spread the wildest rumours among them, alternately

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raising and shattering their hopes. More particularly we renewed our efforts to recruit a striking force from their non-German troops, sending out two Turkish-speaking *hojas* to incite the Turkoman units on Cape Rodonit to revolt. 727 •

Meanwhile, with the help of Abas Kupi's organisation, we also penetrated the mind of the German Command. A young German officer who worked in the Operations Bureau of the Corps Headquarters in Tirana had confided in an Albanian friend that he did not mean to trust his life to the hazards of the retreat. He proposed instead to remain in Albania and had asked for advice as to where he might best hide himself. His friend was a Zogist, and, after devious negotiations, the German offered to supply us with exact details of the German Order of Battle and with advance copies of all Operational Orders. In return he asked us for a safe conduct, so that, when the Corps Headquarters were withdrawn, he might escape to our Mission, to be sent home as soon as the war was over and spared internment as a prisoner of war. We accepted his terms at once, and for the next two months were able to inform our Headquarters, and the R.A.F., of the intentions and daily movements of every company of German troops throughout Albania.

Smiley, meanwhile, had been reconnoitring the approaches to Durazzo in the company of the Commandant of the Durazzo gendarmerie. He passed four German "check-posts" in the latter's car and then set out on foot with his interpreter, Halit Kola, to inspect the defences of the city. The two were thus busily engaged when they were stopped by a German patrol who asked for their identity cards. Halit produced a document of sorts which satisfied the Germans, but Smiley, having no papers, tried to bluff his way through by talking excitedly in Albanian. The corporal in charge of the patrol was stubborn, and, after a few moments' argument, Smiley turned his back on him and walked slowly away. The corporal drew his revolver and took aim; Smiley, unconscious of his danger, walked on. Halit waited breathless for the shot, but the German shook his head as if to say: "Why kill a poor Albanian peasant?" then with a shrug of his shoulders he put the weapon 000

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instead of the usual carpets and cushions, the floor on both sides of the room was piled three feet deep with banks of fresh bracken.

Our host and protector, General Prenk Previsi, had played an important part in the revolution of 1924, and, with Muharrem Bairaktar, Fikri Dine, and Jemal Herri, had formed the quadrumvirate by whose efforts Zog's regime had been established among the Ghegs. When he had served the royal purpose Zog had deprived him of his command and had promoted him to an appointment on the General Staff, where he had enjoyed honour without exercising influence. More pliable than his fellow quadrumvirs, Prenk Previsi had laid aside his political ambitions and had devoted an unusual talent for intrigue to his advancement in the military career. He had won the favour of General Pariani, the head of the Italian Military Mission, and had been chosen by him to accompany the Italian armies in the Abyssinian War as Albanian observer. On his return he had been appointed Albanian Military Attaché in Rome, and his subsequent submission to the Italian crown had been rewarded with the rank of General. The Italians had given him a command during the Greek campaign, but he had been suspected of correspondence with the enemy and had been transferred to Scutari as Albanian adviser to the Italian Commandant. He had employed the next two years in building up a faction among the Albanian officers, but had stood aside from the general revolt against the Italians, retiring with his chief supporters to his native district of Kurbenesh. There he had remained until, in November 1943, the Council of Regency set up under the Germans had summoned him to the Supreme Command.

His career as Commander-in-Chief had been stormy; for, while it was German policy to divide and rule, Prenk Previsi was determined to keep all the Albanian armed forces under his own command. His struggle with the Germans was necessarily unequal, but he emerged triumphant from their first challenge to his authority. The Germans had decided to raise an Albanian S.S. Division for the German army, and had offered command of the first brigade to a certain Salami

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Chelai. This Chelai was a Captain on the Reserve, and as such came under the jurisdiction of Prenk Previsi. Now the General was naturally opposed to the formation of an Albanian unit which would not be subject to his authority, and had therefore ordered Chelai to decline the appointment. On German advice, however, Chelai disregarded this order; and one morning the General observed him entering the German Corps Headquarters, dressed in Colonel's uniform. Injured in his dignity, he resolved "to make an example" and ordered Chelai's immediate "execution". An hour later, as the wretched man emerged from his conference, the General's A.D.C.s and orderlies despatched him on the steps of the German Headquarters with two hand-grenades and a volley from their submachine-guns. The General himself enjoyed the proceedings from his office window; and a large crowd gathered to demonstrate their approval. The Germans were not unnaturally enraged by such high-handed defiance, and demanded Prenk Previsi's instant dismissal and punishment. The old Regent, Mehdi Bey, however, had learnt his politics under the Ottoman Empire, and, summoning the General in the presence of the German Commanding Officer, said to him:

"I must ask you to apologise to our German friend for the mess your men have made on his doorstep. Next time you have to shoot an officer, see that it is done in a barracks and not in the street."

The German took the hint; an S.S. division was later formed in the Kossovo, but the attempt was never repeated within the frontiers of the old kingdom.

Prenk Previsi survived the incident, but his relations with the Germans were permanently impaired. His requests for arms and ammunition for the Albanian army were thenceforth invariably rejected; and a letter which he had addressed to General Fistun on this subject was returned to him like a schoolboy's unsatisfactory exercise with "Nein" scrawled across the top of it in green ink. It was this slight which had finally decided him to turn against the Germans, and, now that he was with their enemies, he unburdened himself of all his pent-up resentment. The account of his "collaboration"

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shine. Then the rains came, turning the ground into marshland, while a cold north wind kept us to the house. The length of our visit strained the resources of the region; supplies of food declined; and, instead of the old *raki* with which we had been welcomed, we were now sold a more bitter brew. Sometimes, in search of news or a more varied diet, we visited neighbouring villages; and, when the evenings were fine, we would stroll through the camp to watch the Turkomans dance round the fires and listen to their wild, sad songs. It grew dark quite early now, and we took to playing chess, at which the Agha cheated as blatantly as Napoleon. Thus ten days passed; and still we waited for the boat.

Meanwhile the Germans had withdrawn from South Albania; they still held Tirana with a strong garrison; but the Corps Headquarters was already removed to Scutari. The Albanian Government disintegrated, some of the Ministers following the German generals, while others remained in the capital, or sought a precarious refuge in Durazzo. The Partisans surged forward in the wake of the German armies, and the Albanians submitted to a Communist government with very varying degrees of enthusiasm. A German defeat was good news under any circumstances; but the change of masters seemed a doubtful benefit to the Albanians; and we could but faintly rejoice at a victory which brought the Straits of Otranto under Russian influence. Our Headquarters, however, still seemed to believe that Enver Hoja was their friend, and summed up their policy towards the Partisans as follows:

"Gradual build-up of L.N.C. and its army will now take place. Our relations with the L.N.C. will be strengthened for post-war purposes."

Our own experience allowed us no such illusions, and we could only smile when the Director of all the Balkan Operations telegraphed us his congratulations and said:

"We are now reaping the benefit of eighteen months' hard work."

We had indeed worked hard, and there were some, though not enough, dead Germans to show for it: but the Russians had worked better, and theirs would be the reward.

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Great richness of effect is produced by such close work in gold, which can only be compared to expert church embroideries, or those decorating some diplomatic uniforms, although the technique is much finer than is usual on these latter garments.

No. 1935-75. A very elegant jelek of violet velvet, almost entirely covered with gold cord and matching violet silk braids and cords, which comes from Ipek (Pec) and belonged to a Moslem woman, has a rather pathetic history. "In the Balkan war of 1912-13 the Montenegrins took Ipek and treated the Moslem inhabitants with hideous brutality. Numbers fled with little but what they stood up in, and sold their garments to buy bread. This was sold by one of these poor victims who had been well-to-do." (M.E.D.). The front and back of the little jacket are illustrated in Plate XI at "A" and "B"; but the refined richness of the purple braiding round the edge and outlining the panels, and the rows of patterned cord work surrounding the gold motive in the centre of the back, cannot be successfully given, as if these parts were made dark as they are in the garment details could not be effectively shown. Gold cord braiding decorates the long narrow front panel (a part is shown at "b"), and there is a little running border on the collar (Plate XI "a"). The inside band, which appears light in the drawing (Plate XIA) consists of eight rows of plaited gold passing sewn down with purple silk. The two side panels in the front (Plate XI "c") have the gold ornament worked in twisted gold thread with the background filled in by rows of purple silk cord. The side panel at the back is similarly worked. Finally the front-opening has sixteen very handsome gold buttons, each made by covering a wooden mould with gold thread, a little purple cord as contrast to emphasize the arrangement of the wrapping, and seven coral beads (Plate XI "d").

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The jacket is lined with a printed cotton lining of mid-Victorian design.

No. 1936-42. Fine black cloth is the foundation of the third jelek, which is bordered by five, plaited, black silk cords, which along the lower edge of the jacket form a large Ionic wave design, each spiral being centred by a rather poor variety of gilt ribbon.

The same ribbon is placed as a stripe down the front, and between it and the braided edge there is a neat little pattern of leaves with a wavy stem worked in gold cord.

The back of the jelek has a centre and two side panels handsomely braided in white silk cord. The design, with its four-petalled flower, has a great similarity to the one on the back of the Zadrima jelek on Plate X, but is much more finely planned and worked. Raised centres of cord enhance the effect of the flowers and form the mid-rib of the conventional leaves.

The white cord design has a fine black cord outline but the black background renders this almost invisible. A black and white braid sewn in close loops finishes off the curves at the lower edge, and on each of the little added flaps in the front there are ten half-buttons in gilt brass.

No. 1939-1. The fourth of the jeleks in this group is an example of one covered entirely with work in gold braid.

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia

Albania EG1

Montenegrins EF5

A 286 513 583 531

The cover measures 8 feet (2·4 m.) by 5 feet 6 inches (1·7 m.) and is made of three widths of material which are joined by needlepoint insertion. Picots with three knots are worked closely along the two edges, and then these are joined by bars of knotted stitchery.

The ends and a little way up each side are also ornamented by similar picots into which a row of wrapped scallops, with smaller picots in bullion stitch, is worked.

These needlepoint trimmings are carried out in red, yellow and green silk, the foundation picots in red, and the scallops in three-inch lengths of each colour in series. Tassels of the mixed colours are added at the corners.

No. 1935-25. A delightful white silk gauze bedcover from Scutari which also formed part of a bridal outfit came from a Catholic family.

A [731 727]

"After the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 there was much distress and things from old family chests were offered for sale. This was one." (M.E.D.).

The spread measures 7 feet 8 inches (2·3 m.) by 5 feet 9 inches (1·7 m.) and is made of three widths of gauze seamed together. Each width of material has groups of stripes near the selvedges consisting of one wide and three narrow stripes of white, five narrow red and three pale green ones; measuring altogether 4¼ inches (11·4 cm.) across.

As two groups of these stripes are joined at the seams three wider groups appear to divide the cover into thirds with narrower bands down the sides. The ends are hemstitched and the hems ornamented by two rows of wrapped buttonholing, into which at distances of two inches little triangles of buttonhole stitch are worked, finished off by a floral motive done in an arrangement of picoted scallops and decorated with three gold sequins.

These little needlepoint motives are worked in sequence in red, green and a soft pink and the bedcover as a whole is charming.

No. 1936-57a. The strips of needlepoint insertion 4 feet 9 inches (1·4 m.) long and 2 inches (5 cm.) wide, and the 9 feet of inch-wide edging are intended for trimming another bedspread. Aniline dyes have been used for the silk thread, and purple, orange, yellow, maroon, emerald and pink are used in sequence for the circular motive in the centre of the insertion and for a few inches along the edge. The final effect is somewhat garish.

C. **A Cloth, possibly for a table.**

M 286 531

No. 1936-44. "A black and dark blue cloth from Kolashin, bought off a dealer in Montenegro, is a curious piece of weaving and I never saw another like it. It is evidently hand-made, native work." (M.E.D.).

This cloth which measures 40 inches (1 m.) by 29 inches (73·7 cm.) is made of two stripes of narrow material, which is tabby-woven in fine black wool, there being 32 warp and 32 weft picks to the inch.

It is entirely covered with a large lozenge design, almost filling the width of the material, bordered by five diagonal lines of small squares and each lozenge enclosing twenty-five repeats of a four-petalled flower in white with a dark blue spot in the centre (Fig. 10).

The whole of the pattern is produced by the use of a large number of free spools, for instance, in the diagonal lines of squares forming the divisions between the big lozenges a new spool is added for every alternate eight warp ends forming a small square, working over and under the next eight warps, and then passes on to the next groups of eight lower down.

In using the spools of white thread each line of pattern is worked backwards and forwards before the next two throws of weft are made.